



Speech by

**Mr S. ROBERTSON**

**MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK**

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Hansard 9 November 1999

**APEC TECHNOMART**

**Mr ROBERTSON** (Sunnybank—ALP) (6.30 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to follow the member for Nerang. I recall that this morning he rose to his feet and asked the insightful question, "Where is the compensation going to come from?" As the Deputy Premier was answering the question, he leaned across to his mate from Southport and said, "This is the only way I'm going to be able to get my money back."

**Mr CONNOR:** I rise to a point of order. That is absolutely untrue. I find it offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn. It is an absolute lie.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member asks for the comment to be withdrawn.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I withdraw. Clearly the position taken by the member for Nerang is that, in order to get his money back, he expects the Government to pay.

**Mr CONNOR:** I rise to a point of order. I am not seeking compensation in any way, shape or form. I did not ask for any compensation for myself. I find that remark offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The member will withdraw.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I am pleased to have it on the record that the member for Nerang is not going to dip into taxpayers' money. What a confused Opposition this is. We have Huey down there who says, "We should never have been involved." Dewey over there says, "How much is this going to cost the Government?" Then we have Louie over here who says, "The Government should compensate." At what stage is the Opposition going to speak with one voice about this matter? The reality is this—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am finding it very difficult to hear the member.

**Mr BEANLAND:** The member for Sunnybank has referred to a member of this Chamber in an unparliamentary manner.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I withdraw.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I do not know that it was unparliamentary.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I have withdrawn.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member has withdrawn several times.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** As has been pointed out continually, the State Government's role in this private sector conference was that of a sponsor. If one uses the logic, such as it is, of the Opposition, if the Broncos fell over tomorrow—God forbid—would the 131 Shop have to bail them out? If the Wallabies did not win the World Cup, would we be blaming Fourex? Of course not! If the Australian netball team did not win the world championship, would we be pulling our accounts from the Commonwealth Bank? Of course not!

This Government went beyond the call of duty. As the member for Nerang quite rightly points out—he did get one thing right—there was the potential for significant embarrassment for Queensland. We did not do what the Federal Government did, which was to walk away. We went in, boots and all, to save the conference and save the reputation of Queensland.

Clearly, we have learnt one lesson from this whole fiasco, which is that we cannot trust the Federal Government to protect the interests of Queensland, because it walked away. The Gold Coast City Council stuck with it and we stuck with it. Letters that are pouring in show how many delegates appreciated that. I spent a fair bit of time down there. I spoke at the aviation industry forum and at the regional development forum. I was at the opening of APEC Technomart. That is what it is all about. It is about sticking with Queensland and making the best out of a bad deal, which is exactly what we did.

Finally, I place on the record my gratitude to the public servants in the Department of State Development. The Leader of the Opposition or the Deputy Leader of the Opposition suggested that they were press-ganged into doing things during the week after APEC Technomart failed. What I witnessed was a commitment by those public servants to making what was left of the conference work. I place on the record my appreciation for the work that they did. That was no thanks to the Opposition that sat back and took the most irresponsible position possible, which was to throw rocks in the hour of need.

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